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301023Z Aug 00

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ACTION AF-00

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	DS-00	EUR-00	VC-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	VCE-00	NSAE-00
	PM-00	P-00	SP-00	STR-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	DRL-02
	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/002W				

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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6967
INFO SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 004818

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF, AF/S, AF/EPS, EB/IFD/ODF, EB/TPP/ODC
TREASURY FOR ED BARBER, GRACE SONE, AND HOFFMAN BARAK
USDOC FOR 2037/ERIC HENDERSON
STATE PASS USTR/RWHITTAKER
NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR GAYLE SMITH
LONDON FOR CHARLES GURNEY
PARIS FOR BISA WILLIAMS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/28/05

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: COMMERCIAL FARMERS: A PLEA FOR INTERNATIONAL
PRESSURE ON MUGABE

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REF: A) HARARE 4695 B) HARARE 4662

CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR MCDONALD, REASONS: 1.5 (B) AND
(D).

SUMMARY

1. (C) THREE COMMERCIAL FARMERS, ACCOMPANIED BY THEIR
LEGAL COUNSEL AND AN MDC MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, TOLD
AMBASSADOR MCDONALD ON AUGUST 28 THAT PHYSICAL
INTIMIDATION OF FARMERS HAD MOSTLY STOPPED. NOW, THE
GOVERNMENT WAS ENCOURAGING SQUATTERS TO BUILD HOUSES ON
OCCUPIED LAND. THEY EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT THE SITUATION
ON MANY FARMS IN THE MASVINGO AREA WAS DETERIORATING, AND
THAT WIDESPREAD POACHING BY WAR VETERANS WAS OCCURRING IN
GAME RESERVES. THE COMMERCIAL FARMERS UNION PLANNED TO
REFILE ITS CONSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGE OF THE LAND
ACQUISITION ACT, REVERSING ITS EARLIER WITHDRAWAL OF THE
CASE, BECAUSE THE GOZ WAS NOT NEGOTIATING IN GOOD FAITH.
THE GROUP URGED THE UNITED STATES TO ENCOURAGE PRESIDENT
MBEKI TO WEIGH IN FORCEFULLY WITH PRESIDENT MUGABE, AND
SUGGESTED THAT SOUTH AFRICA'S THREATENING A TOTAL CUTOFF
OF FUEL AND ELECTRICITY COULD CONVINCE THE ZIMBABWEAN
PRESIDENT TO CHANGE COURSE. THIS GROUP OF FARMERS HAS
CONCLUDED THAT FURTHER DIALOGUE WITH THE GOVERNMENT WILL
LEAD NOWHERE AND IS CONVINCED THAT ONLY INTERNATIONAL
PRESSURE ON MUGABE WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE. WE BELIEVE IT
MIGHT BE TIME TO CONSIDER ENCOURAGING MBEKI AGAIN TO
WEIGH IN WITH THE ZIMBABWEAN PRESIDENT, A COURSE OF
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ACTION ON WHICH WE WOULD WELCOME EMBASSY PRETORIA'S AND
DEPARTMENT'S THINKING. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) BOB HENSON, WHO OWNS A TOBACCO FARM NEAR DOMA,
SEVERAL HUNDRED KILOMETERS NORTHEAST OF HARARE, CALLED ON
AMBASSADOR MCDONALD ON AUGUST 28 TO BRIEF HIM ON CURRENT
LAND-RELATED DEVELOPMENTS. HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY MIKE
AURET, A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FROM THE OPPOSITION
MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE (MDC), ATTORNEY JEREMY
CALLOW, AND TWO COMMERCIAL FARMERS, JOHN TOPPING AND
PETER FORSYTHE. THE AMBASSADOR WAS JOINED BY POLOFF.

CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS

3. (C) JOHN TOPPING, WHO OWNS A FARM 75 KM NORTH OF THE
CAPITAL NEAR BINDURA, REPORTED THAT MOST OF THE PHYSICAL
AGGRESSION AGAINST FARMERS IN HIS AREA HAD STOPPED. THE
GOVERNMENT'S PRIMARY OBJECTIVE NOW APPEARED TO BE TO MOVE
PEOPLE ONTO LAND AND ENCOURAGE THEM TO BUILD HOUSES.

SQUATTERS IN SOME AREAS WERE ARRIVING WITH CORRUGATED IRON AND OTHERS WITH PRE-FAB HOUSING, TRANSPORTED THERE BY GOVERNMENT VEHICLES. HE CLAIMED THAT SOME OF THE SO-CALLED WAR VETERANS WERE NOT INTERESTED IN LAND AND WOULD DRIFT AWAY IF NOT CLOSELY SUPERVISED BY THOSE WHO HAD BROUGHT THEM. FARMERS ARE NOW GENERALLY REFUSING ALL REQUESTS FROM WAR VETERANS FOR FOOD, MONEY, OR ANY OTHER KINDS OF ASSISTANCE. IN FACT, MANY HAVE DETERMINED NOT TO SPEAK TO THE WAR VETERANS.

14. (C) FORSYTHE, WHOSE FARM IS LOCATED SOME 40 KM EAST
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OF HARARE NEAR ARCTURUS, SAID THE WAR VETERANS IN HIS AREA HAD ATTEMPTED TO FORCE A WORK STOPPAGE THE PREVIOUS WEEK. (NOTE: THE ARCTURUS AREA HAS BEEN A HOTBED OF PROBLEMS SINCE THE FARM INVASIONS BEGAN. END NOTE.) FARM WORKERS, HOWEVER, HAD REFUSED TO BE INTIMIDATED, AND PLANTING WAS CURRENTLY PROCEEDING. HE SAID THE SITUATION WAS DETERIORATING IN MASVINGO PROVINCE, IN SOUTH-CENTRAL ZIMBABWE, WHERE WAR VETERANS WERE DOING SERIOUS DAMAGE ON MANY FARMS. MP AURET ADDED THAT A GREAT DEAL OF DESTRUCTION IS OCCURRING IN GAME RESERVES, WHERE POACHING, AIDED BY GOVERNMENT VEHICLES, IS OUT OF CONTROL. STONE RIDGE FARM, ONE OF THOSE FROM WHICH SQUATTERS WERE RECENTLY EVICTED, HAS BEEN REOCCUPIED AND THE OWNER HAS RECEIVED DEATH THREATS.

15. (C) THE AMBASSADOR ASKED ABOUT THE IMPACT OF THE APPARENT EXPULSION OF CHENJERAI HUNZVI AS CHAIRMAN OF THE WAR VETERANS ASSOCIATION. AURET SAID THE ACTION HAD BEEN PRECIPITATED BY WAR VETERANS ANGERED BY HUNZVI'S DICTATORIAL LEADERSHIP AND HIS ALLEGED MISAPPROPRIATION OF FUNDS AT ZEXCOM, A COMPANY OWNED AND OPERATED BY WAR VETERANS. AURET SAID THE ISSUE WAS FAR FROM OVER,

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	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/002W				

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P 301023Z AUG 00
FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6968
INFO SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 HARARE 004818

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HOWEVER, AS HUNZVI WAS CHALLENGING THE ACTION AND
PRESIDENT MUGABE COULD REINSTATE HUNZVI ANY TIME HE
CHOSE.

CFU'S LEGAL CHALLENGE

16. (C) THE AMBASSADOR RECALLED THAT THE COMMERCIAL FARMERS UNION (CFU) HAD RECENTLY WITHDRAWN ITS LEGAL CHALLENGE OF AMENDMENTS MADE TO THE LAND ACQUISITION ACT. HAD THE WITHDRAWAL CAUSED A SPLIT WITHIN THE CFU? NO, BOB HENSON REPLIED, MEMBERS OF THE CFU HAD RESOLVED THEIR DIFFERENCES OVER THIS ISSUE AND REMAINED UNITED. JEREMY CALLOW SAID THE CFU PLANNED IN THE NEXT DAY OR TWO TO RESUBMIT ITS CASE CHALLENGING THE CONSTITUTIONALITY OF THE AMENDMENTS TO THE LAND ACQUISITION ACT, THE LEGAL BASIS FOR THE GOVERNMENT'S FAST TRACK RESETTLEMENT EFFORT. THE CASE HAD BEEN WITHDRAWN SEVERAL WEEKS EARLIER, CALLOW SAID, IN AN EFFORT TO PRESERVE A CHANNEL

OF COMMUNICATION WITH THE GOZ. (NOTE: CALLOW IS A
PROMINENT LOCAL LAWYER WHO REPRESENTED THE THREE
AMERICANS DETAINED HERE LAST YEAR ON WEAPONS CHARGES.
END NOTE.)

17. (C) ACCORDING TO CALLOW, IT IS NOW CLEAR THAT THE GOZ
IS NOT COMMUNICATING WITH THE CFU IN GOOD FAITH. THE
GOVERNMENT PAYS LIP SERVICE TO THE IMPORTANCE OF
DIALOGUE, WHILE CONTINUING TO PERMIT LAND INVASIONS, AND
ANNOUNCING THAT IT WILL COMPENSATE SQUATTERS FOR PROPERTY
DAMAGED IN POLICE EVICTIONS THE WEEK OF AUGUST 21.
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18. (C) CALLOW HOPED THE COURTS WOULD ISSUE AN
INJUNCTION STOPPING THE CURRENT LAND ACQUISITION PROGRAM.
ASSUMING THE COURT RULED IN THE CFU'S FAVOR, THE
AMBASSADOR ASKED, DID CALLOW BELIEVE THE GOZ WOULD
COMPLY? PROBABLY NOT, CALLOW RESPONDED, BUT IT WAS
CRUCIAL FOR HIS CLIENTS TO MAKE THEIR RECORD AND FOR THE
FARMERS' OWN CREDIBILITY WITH THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY
THAT THEY PURSUE EVERY POSSIBLE AVENUE OPEN TO THEM.

FUEL AND ELECTRICITY CRUCIAL LEVERS WITH MUGABE

19. (C) AURET SAID ZIMBABWE WAS "ON ITS BACKSIDE" AND WAS
ABLE TO STAGGER ALONG PRIMARILY BECAUSE OF SOUTH AFRICA'S
PROVISION OF FUEL AND ELECTRICITY. TOPPING ADDED THAT
THE THREAT OF A TOTAL CUTOFF OF LIGHTS AND FUEL WAS
PERHAPS THE ONLY EFFECTIVE TOOL LEFT THAT MIGHT TURN
MUGABE AROUND. THE TURMOIL IN ZIMBABWE WAS AFFECTING THE
ENTIRE REGION, AND HE HOPED THE UNITED STATES COULD
ENCOURAGE SOUTH AFRICA TO BRING PRESSURE TO BEAR ON
MUGABE. HE AND THE OTHERS IN THE ROOM, TOPPING SAID,
WERE TRYING NOT ONLY TO SAVE THEIR OWN LAND, BUT TO DO
ALL THEY COULD TO PREVENT THEIR COUNTRY FROM "GOING DOWN
THE TUBES."

110. (C) THE AMBASSADOR STRESSED THAT WE WILL CONTINUE TO
PRESS THE GOZ AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS TO RESTORE THE RULE
OF LAW AND TO TAKE THE NECESSARY STEPS TO PUT THE ECONOMY
BACK ON TRACK. OUR LEVERAGE IS LIMITED, HOWEVER, AS WE
PROVIDE NO DIRECT ASSISTANCE TO THE GOVERNMENT. WE WOULD
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CONTINUE TO DO ALL WE COULD TO NUDGE MUGABE IN THE RIGHT
DIRECTION, BUT SOUTH AFRICA IS THE KEY PLAYER HERE. THE
UNITED STATES IS IN REGULAR CONTACT WITH PRESIDENT MBEKI
ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS IN ZIMBABWE AND HAS URGED HIM TO WEIGH
IN WITH MUGABE. MBEKI HAS BEEN HELPFUL, BUT HE HAS TO BE
CAREFUL. IF HE PUSHES TOO HARD, MUGABE IS CAPABLE OF
WITHDRAWING INTO A SHELL AND GOING IT ALONE.

COMMENT

111. (C) THERE WAS A TONE OF DESPERATION AMONG THE
MEMBERS OF THIS GROUP. THEY REFLECT WIDESPREAD CONCERN
ABOUT THE SEVERE DAMAGE THE GOVERNMENT'S HAPHAZARD
RESETTLEMENT EFFORT IS DOING TO FARMERS' LIVELIHOODS, TO
AGRICULTURE, AND TO THE COUNTRY AS A WHOLE. THEY HAVE
LOST CONFIDENCE THAT ENGAGING IN DIALOGUE WITH THE
GOVERNMENT WILL MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE, AND HAVE CONCLUDED
THAT ONLY PRESSURE FROM THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY CAN
FORCE MUGABE TO CHANGE COURSE. THE GROUP'S SUGGESTION
THAT WE ENCOURAGE MBEKI AGAIN TO WEIGH IN WITH MUGABE
MERITS SERIOUS CONSIDERATION, AND WE WOULD WELCOME

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P 301023Z AUG 00
FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6969
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DEPARTMENT'S AND EMBASSY PRETORIA'S THINKING ON THIS
ISSUE.

12. (C) DESPITE THIS GROUP'S CONTENTION THAT THE
SITUATION ON COMMERCIAL FARMS IS GETTING WORSE, THE REAL
PICTURE IS ACTUALLY UNCLEAR. THERE HAVE BEEN FEW NEW
FARM INVASIONS DURING THE PAST SEVERAL DAYS, ACCORDING TO
THE CFU, BUT NEITHER HAVE THERE BEEN ANY FURTHER POLICE
EVICTIONS OF WAR VETERANS SUBSEQUENT TO THOSE REPORTED IN
REF B. IN AN ENCOURAGING DEVELOPMENT, POLICE IN MOST
PROVINCES ARE NOW RESPONDING WHEN SQUATTERS ENGAGE IN
CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES, SUCH AS INTERFERING WITH FARMING
OPERATIONS, ASSAULTING FARMERS AND FARM WORKERS, STEALING
PROPERTY, AND CUTTING DOWN TREES.

13. (C) THE QUESTION NOW, OF COURSE, IS HOW THE
GOVERNMENT PLANS TO PROCEED. AS INDICATED IN PREVIOUS
REPORTING, VICE-PRESIDENT MSIKA, HOME AFFAIRS MINISTER
JOHN NKOMO, AND OTHER SENIOR OFFICIALS HAVE TOLD US
RECENTLY THAT THE GOVERNMENT PLANS TO MOVE SQUATTERS OFF
NON-DESIGNATED FARMS TO THOSE IDENTIFIED FOR COMPULSORY
ACQUISITION. PRESIDENT MUGABE, HOWEVER, IS CLEARLY
UNCOMFORTABLE WITH THAT COURSE OF ACTION, AND WE HAVE NOT
YET SEEN ANY MOVEMENT IN THAT DIRECTION. EFFORTS BY THE
GOZ TO ADDRESS THE LAND REFORM ISSUE IN A FAIR AND
TRANSPARENT WAY HAVE OCCURRED ONLY WHEN MUGABE IS OUT OF
THE COUNTRY AND HAVE BEEN REVERSED UPON HIS RETURN. THE
EVICTIONS, FOR INSTANCE, WERE CARRIED OUT LAST WEEK WHILE
MUGABE WAS IN MOZAMBIQUE, BUT STOPPED WHEN HE CAME BACK.
THE RESULTING GOZ POLICY ON LAND IS CYCLICAL AND

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HAPHAZARD, IN WHICH IT REGULARLY TAKES ONE STEP FORWARD,
THEN TWO STEPS BACK. WE NOTE THAT PRESIDENT MUGABE WILL
BE IN NEW YORK THIS WEEK FOR THE MILLENNIUM SUMMIT. HIS
ABSENCE COULD PROVIDE AN OPENING, ALTHOUGH CERTAINLY A
TEMPORARY ONE, FOR SOME POSITIVE MOVEMENT ON LAND.

MCDONALD

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